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Video Campaign on Behalf of the RISPCA

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According to the ASPCA, it is estimated that 70-80 million dogs and 74-96 million cats are owned in the United States. It is impossible to determine how many stray dogs and cats live in the US, but estimates for cats alone range up to 70 million. The average number of litters a fertile cat produces is one to three a year and the average number of kittens is 4-6 per litter. The average number of litters a fertile dog produces is one to two a year and the average number of puppies is 6-10 per litter. It is evident that there will always be a need for the protection and care of stray, abandoned, and abused animals, as well as some kind of management of their population. These companion animals are our best friends and have easily integrated into our families and neighborhoods over the years. They've simply made our childhoods, our children's childhoods, and so on throughout the generations. There are about 13,600 community animal shelters nationwide that are independent, which means they are ran on private funding, grants, sponsorships and donations. Each year approximately 7.6 million companion animals enter animal shelters, 2.7 million are adopted and 3.7 million are euthanized. There are definitely other alternatives than euthanasia.

Specifically, the Rhode Island Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RISPCA) is dedicated to the rights and welfare of animal life through legal, educational, legislative and investigative means. RISPCA is the third oldest humane organization in the U.S. at 146 years old. It is also the only non-profit animal rescue organization in the state of Rhode Island that is legally able to investigate and prosecute animal cruelty cases. Since they are privately funded, they are in regular need of support and donations of time, as well as money and supplies from the community to provide the services they do. They have held many fun fundraisers and events for the community, such as the Annual Heart and Paws Pasta Dinner, the Pitter Patter of Tiny Paws Baby Shower, Horse Rides, the Marvelous Marvin

Memorial Walk, and much more, but an increased community involvement would speak volumes for the situation at hand. This is where I would come in. For my senior Honors project, I plan to incorporate both of my majors of Film Media and Communication Studies to assist the RISPCA's communication campaign. My goal is to help increase the awareness of the organization, its mission: to protect animal life in all situations that might endanger them, and also the services they provide through legal, financial, and logistical pressures. I would begin this process with something that I love to do – create videos.

I intend on making five videos in all. This would include an introductory video about the organization, its mission, facility, and adoption process. This will inform the general public about the organization visually, as well as provide insight on how adoption works from a professional point of view. Their processes are extremely extensive and important in ensuring that their animals receive the utmost of care once they are adopted. It is not a “first come, first serve” basis, but rather a “best fit” basis. This video will involve general information about the organization itself, a run-through of their facilities, their major events, and information about their processes for adoption. I will acquire this information from their website and interviews with staff members. If they agree to be interviewed on camera, there will be portions of the interviews used to relay certain information other than narration. Most of this piece will entail narration over images and videos, which will mainly take place at the animal rescue itself.

Next, I would create a video about the aspect of fighting cruelty, as Joe embarks on a variety of investigations and hearings pertaining to animal cruelty. This is an aspect that makes this animal rescue especially unique, as most organizations do not have the capabilities or legal means for this type of program. In this video I will define what animal cruelty is, provide significant laws pertaining to animal cruelty, and introduce the organization's humane officer

and investigator, Joe. I plan on shooting an interview with him as he explains his career, cruelty cases, and daily processes. This will be a more documentary based video as I will be following Joe on the road to expose what he deals with, giving the public an insight to his services and the work that goes into it. I will be acquiring information mostly from Joe, but also from their website. This video's locations will be at the RISPCA and other parts of Rhode Island depending on the cases.

Next, I would create two informational videos for their Humane Education program on matters such as the feral cat dilemma, and adoption vs. buying. In the feral cat dilemma video, I will relay information about the overpopulation of feral and stray cats, the causes of overpopulation, distinguish the differences between the types of domestic cats, how this overpopulation can be a threat to native wildlife, the hazards feral and strays are subject to, and the solution: to spay and neuter. I will acquire this information from their website and online sources provided by staff members. This video will include narration over images and video of cats and wildlife. Locations will be at the RISPCA and other areas of Rhode Island that may have cat colonies, as well as my own backyard in New York. We have had a colony of semi-feral cats for years.

As for the adoption vs. buying video, I will relay information about puppy mills, backyard breeding, legislation in Rhode Island about puppy mills and breeders, and simply why to adopt rather than buy. This video will also touch upon the overpopulation issue, as breeding more animals negatively adds to the situation rather than adopting to help it. This video will include narration over images and video and possibly interviews with staff. It is clear that both of these matters go duly unnoticed by the public as people are still breeding and buying their

companion animals rather than simply adopting. I believe it could be extremely beneficial to help raise awareness in this way and to educate the public.

Last but certainly not least, I would make a commercial advocating for people to adopt a great companion from the RISPCA. This commercial would entail a short storyline of a dog driving an RISPCA van picking up his owner and taking a road trip together, accompanied by a catchy song. This will present the partnership or bond that can be found when adopting a companion animal. I would need an obedient dog, dog treats, someone to play his owner, and permissions to the song of choosing. This commercial will be created in hopes to have a persuasive outcome.

The process of each video will be broken down into three stages; the preproduction stage, production stage, and postproduction stage. In preproduction, I will do extensive research on the topic at hand. Information will be acquired from a variety of sources, including the RISPCA website, staff members, and online sources. Once all sufficient information is obtained, I will write scripts using the sources that pertain to each topic. From there, I will plan out a visual storyboard to accompany the dialogue. My sponsor, Mary Healey Jamiel, and staff of the RISPCA will review the content of each script and storyboard to provide feedback. I will take all feedback into consideration and make the changes needed. Once my scripts and storyboards are approved based on the content and how effective it is, I will begin the production process. This will involve film equipment such as a camera, tripod, lighting equipment, and audio equipment. I will use my Canon Rebel t5i and GoPro Hero 4 along with some of its accessories, like the dog harness. I will have to borrow lighting equipment and audio equipment from URI for the interviews and extra audio I plan to incorporate. I will use this equipment to capture the images and audio I need to carry out this project. I will also have

to find someone with a credible voice to narrate these videos. Words must be extremely clear and intelligible. The voice will also be reviewed. Postproduction entails editing all the pieces together on editing software. I will be using Final Cut Pro X. I will create rough cuts of each video throughout the semester and the RISPCA and my sponsor will review them and give feedback. I will then continue to make the changes needed.

It is transparent that each video and post involves an extensive process. I have some experience in creating informational videos, but have never created something documentary based. Above all, this project will be an immensely valuable learning experience for me. Working with a non-profit organization that is in such high demand alone will help improve my communication skills to collaborate and also gain more experience in a professional setting. I will learn more effective preproduction, production, and postproduction techniques, interviewing techniques for more comfortability, and also learn a lot about the RISPCA and the topics presented. This project will succumb to a lot of trial and error, as it will definitely consist of experimentation and revision. I have to learn to accept when things don't work out the way I originally plan and constructively use the feedback presented to go forth. Inevitably, this work will bring a great amount of hands on experience. I am making a commitment to something much bigger than myself, so each logistical and creative decision made must support the RISPCA's mission and be reviewed. I will be documenting each visit and step that I take so that I can reflect and make self-evaluations of each video and post.

There are no guarantees that the organization will definitely use my videos or that their network will be expanded, but it is definitely worth the experience and knowledge I can potentially gain. This project will hands down be the most valuable and challenging thing to be accomplished during my college career. I also possess a very personal connection to the

matter. My family has always been animal lovers and I was also raised to be one. I'm from Staten Island, New York, and it is common to see stray cats around. Over the years there have been so many litters in my neighborhood as they just keep reproducing. Even to this very day we continue to feed them daily. My family and I have caught well over twenty cats, "humanized them" (as my mom likes to call it) and found them homes. All of my housed furry best friends have been from the neighborhood ever since I was little. We actually recently brought in a beautiful white and black female, as my parents fell in love with her. She simply just walked in our house after getting a little comfortable with them. Her brother often taps on our window to say hello! Many of my family members and friends happily own cats that we have rescued. Although we have had much success over the years, it is inevitable to come across some heartbreak along the way. Nonetheless, rescuing animals provides nothing but feelings of reward and unconditional love.

I knew I loved film way before I had to pick a major for it. After taking some production and advertising classes here at URI, I plan to possibly work in the field of advertising or television after graduation via videography or social media. I am very fortunate to be working with my sponsor and such an organization. I am very excited to finally take on this project, and it could very well be the factor that helps me stand out from the rest in the future.